

County Extension Committee Meeting –  
October 26, 2011 - Cotton Town Hall

Present: Jan Dzwonkowski, Doug Hoffbauer, Jerry Meier, Peg Sweeney  
Others: Gary Eckenberg, Mardi Harder, Shirley Lantz, Patty Swedberg, Jan Derdowski, Wade Herbranson, Carol Dinius

Doug Hoffbauer, Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. Pledge was recited.  
Minutes for August meeting could not be approved as there was not a quorum.

### **Featured Program – 4-H Youth Development**

Wade spoke about his goals he set for his first 6 months--attend at least one meeting of each club and to survive County Fair—he did accomplish these goals. He spoke about observations and directions for the program. The program report handouts will be emailed to Mardi and Patty so they can be shared with committee members not present. Other highlights from Wade:

- New on-line enrollment system is being used and working better than the 2010 system.
- Project clubs for dog and horse are in place. These kinds of activities keep older 4-H members engaged and help recruit new members. Peg asked about having a program at the Mesabi Academy--Wade responded he has connections there and is checking into it.
- Plans to begin mailing out one newsletter to each club leader to make sure they are getting the information they need.
- Starting a Leader Round Table--which will be a very informal group of leaders meeting once a month to ask questions and share information.

Jan presented Val's report information. Mardi asked if there could be a schematic put together that would include the location of all clubs in the county—and not divide between north and south.

Wade will work on this and circulate copies.

- One of the program highlights was the LEGO Robotics team that competed at a regional event and junior team won a trip to the state contest. Mardi asked if LEGO Robotics provides any funding or promotion for 4-H. Jan explained they don't provide financial support but do provide much support for tournaments.
- Potential for new 4-H clubs
- Working to establish project bowl teams
- Helping clubs transition as their membership gets older

Carol Dinius gave a report for the Incredible Exchange Program

- Currently have 39 sites--4 more than in 2010
- Site mentors assisted at Youth Orientation sessions
- New support staff (Sarah) evaluated existing systems and made positive changes related to organization and procedures for program to be more efficient
- Looking forward to on-line registration

All three coordinators continue to focus on quality programming.

Peg talked about the history of Incredible Exchange and wants to be sure St. Louis County is identified and given credit for creating this program. Patty informed Peg that St. Louis County is included on publications and website.

### **EFANS Positions**

Gary provided an update on these positions. Basically there have been no changes since the Sept. 13 budget meeting. The 90-day non-renewal notification for the MOA was provided to the university stating the county would not be renewing the 2 EE positions currently held by Kendall and Bob. The county will prepare a service contract for Bob/Kendall to deliver programs--Bob at full-time; Kendall at part-time. The total of the contracts would be \$95,000; no benefits included with these positions. This would be a savings of \$100,000 to the SLC budget. Doug commented the county would only be saving \$65,000 and inquired where the remaining \$35,000 would come from. Gary responded this includes revenue streams generated from these positions. We are looking at other ways to collaborate with county depts. and PHHS—an expansion of SLC program activities.

Doug is concerned with wood ash and mineland reclamation being 25% of Kendall's job as he would not have time for any work with horticulture or small farms. It's possible that Bob may be doing some horticulture work county-wide. Gary stated contracts will be brought forth to committee—looking at a 3-year contract with annual renewable opportunities.

Mardi said she has been contacted by Dave Moen, Master Gardener program director. He would like to discuss how the master gardener program can be fulfilled with the contracted positions.

Doug asked about the role of the Extension Committee--why they exist if their concerns have no bearing. They have spent a lot of time and effort on Extension creating career ladders, etc. Mardi responded a state statute exists for CEC. Their work involves local needs and being fiscally responsible—assessing needs to local communities and partnership of university and county.

Jerry commented on the \$100,000 reduction being a huge hit to our budget--seems like Extension budget is reduced every year. Doug is worried what will happen when Bob leaves--will be difficult to get these services. He feels the University would have a higher quality applicant pool than the county would. Jerry stated it all comes down to dollars and cents.

Peg commented SLC has pared down to core functions and has removed some programs. This committee has a very valuable role. What would the committee do to save that money if they didn't do it through these two positions? The number of county employees has dropped from 2,500 to under 1,700 in 15 years. The county board still has to find about \$2,000,000 to meet the levy that has been set. Jerry stated he believes the committee is necessary and he is not ready to give up.

### **Staff Performance Input Forms**

Mardi stated for 2011 the CEC will be evaluating 4-H coordinators, community nutrition educators and regional director. Evaluations are scheduled for the December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting and a quorum is needed; evaluations are due December 30. Patty will put together a performance evaluation packet and mail materials to members. Some members are not able to attend Dec. 14. Patty will communicate with entire committee to find a common meeting date. Currently a meeting has not been scheduled for November.

### **Regional director roles and responsibilities**

This position is a liaison to the CEC. The University offered a retirement incentive option (RIO) and 4 regional directors accepted it. A team of regional directors will be working together—their roles will have a greater program link. Peg commented on losing institutional knowledge with all of these retirements. A new regional office will be located in Willmar. Two regional offices will close at the end of the year. There were 18 regional offices in 2004 and will be 15 in 2012. Mardi will keep the committee informed of changes.

### **2012 Meetings; feature programs**

Mardi wanted to know feature programs to schedule for 2012--should they focus more on outcomes. What information should be provided from program staff? Peg commented on wanting to see numbers of participants and program locations. Would like to know what participants learned and what impact it had. Peg wants to know how each dean identifies their program priorities. Mardi said each dean does set program priorities and what resources and efficiencies make them viable. The deans then bring these requests to the board of regents.

Peg talked about being able to bring information to county board on what makes Extension a core function--need to justify our existence. Mardi asked if the committee was ready to enter into a long range strategy. Peg thought getting together with Carlton and Lake Counties would be valuable--having a facilitator and spending a day to discuss priorities and justifications. This could possibly be done in late winter/early spring to be ready for the next budget cycle.

**Holiday Project**

Patty informed the committee that Duluth and Hibbing Salvation Army locations will be distributing hams this year instead of turkeys because of the price; Virginia will continue distributing turkeys. They will be a 4 pound boneless ham--larger families will receive 2 hams. We will revise the brochure to incorporate information and recipes for using ham. We may consider ordering smaller roasting pans for hams. Patty stated large pans will cost \$.88 this year compared to \$.77 last year. The fundraising total is currently \$150. We are still waiting for responses from additional grant requests made to Lake Country Power and MP&L.

**Next Meeting**

Currently scheduled for December 14<sup>th</sup> (9:00-11:00); agenda includes staff performance input.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Shirley Lantz